



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development  
Rm. 152 Federal Building 100 Centennial Mall North Lincoln, Neb. 68508  
(402) 437-5551 (Phone) (402) 437-5093 (TDY) (402) 437-5408 (Fax)

Deb Yocum, USDA Rural Development (402) 223-3125  
Terri Teuber, Governor's Office (402) 471-2244

## **State and Federal Officials Announce \$1.3 Million in Value-Added Grants From USDA Rural Development**

**Lincoln, Neb., October 14, 2004**—Two events are scheduled today to present nearly \$1.3 million in value-added agricultural product market development grants to seven Nebraska producers. The first event brings together state and federal officials to present nearly \$758,000 in grants to four southeast Nebraska producers.

Lieutenant Governor Dave Heineman and Tom Dorr, Senior Policy Advisor to the Secretary of Agriculture on Rural Development, presented symbolic checks to the four producers who will use the funds to develop new products and tap into new markets.

Lt. Gov. Dave Heineman said, "I am very pleased to join our federal partners to announce these grants. Value-added products play an important role in our economy, not only in terms of the jobs and income generated, but because of the investment made in our local communities. These grants represent a continuing commitment to producers and small businesses in Nebraska."

"These grants are an important part of the Bush Administration's overall investment in the economic strength of rural Nebraska," stated Dorr. "I commend each of the recipients for their development of proposals to explore new ways of utilizing Nebraska's natural resources."

The four recipients recognized this morning in Lincoln are as follows:

- Country Side Cooperative of Firth, the recipient of \$415,000 will use funds to study the marketing potential for soybean processing via a feasibility study and business and marketing plan. Through the processing of soybeans, it is believed that the beans can be enhanced, providing a higher quality soy product to the livestock producers, food processors, or industrial processors.
- Krista Peeks Dittman in Raymond will utilize \$13,315 for a feasibility study to examine the market potential for an onsite cooperative dairy processing facility to add value to the milk through its processing and to produce specialty cheeses, butter and yogurt.
- Nebraska Soybean Association of Lincoln received \$237,300 to conduct a statewide assessment through coordination of several key organizations in the state to identify the best location or locations for regionally located soybean processing facilities and a statewide bio-diesel production facility. The facility is expected to use multiple feed stocks that range from expeller or hexane extracted soybean oil from current or future soybean processors and other vegetable oil or animal fat feed stocks that are economically viable.
- Stonebridge Vineyard, Inc. in Pawnee City received \$92,329 that will be used for working capital to assist in their efforts to diversify and increase profits to their established seven acre vineyard. This to be accomplished by entering the value-added Nebraska wine market as a winery and developing it as a tourist destination through marketing of the vineyard's unique history.

-more-

The remaining three producers will be presented later today in Grand Island with symbolic checks by U.S. Congressman Tom Osborne and Senior Policy Advisor Tom Dorr that total nearly \$531,000.

“The awarding of the value-added grants came as great news for rural Nebraska,” stated Jim Barr, Nebraska state director for USDA Rural Development. “Value-added projects like those identified today, help the rural economy as producers reap a greater value for their commodity and in turn reinvest those profits back into the local economy.”

The 2002 Farm Bill made available a total of \$240 million in Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grants to be utilized over the next 6 years. The program is designed to help producers to expand the customer base for their commodities through a value-added activity that allows producers to retain a greater profit in the marketplace. Since the beginning of the program, Nebraska has received close to \$7 million assisting in 38 value-added ventures.

For additional information contact Deb Yocum at 201 N. 25<sup>th</sup> Street Beatrice, Neb. 68310; [debra.yocum@ne.usda.gov](mailto:debra.yocum@ne.usda.gov) or phone (402) 223-3125, (402) 437-5093 (TDY). Visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne/>.

#

USDA Rural Development is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider and Employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to USDA, Director, OCR, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.